

Are you or do you know an unemployed Veteran age 35-60?

If so, there is a new Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor (DOL) education benefit program that helps train Veterans in high demand occupations.

As a VetSuccess.gov user we would like to share information about our new programs and benefits that are underway due to the enactment of a new law. In an effort to reduce Veteran unemployment, the President signed into law the *VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011* last November. Included in this new law is the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) for unemployed Veterans, which VA begins accepting applications May 15, 2012.

VRAP will provide 99,000 eligible Veterans with up to one year of additional Montgomery GI Bill benefits in order to help you earn training and certifications in a high demand job. In order to receive these benefits, you must attend a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school.

The requirements to be eligible for the VRAP program are:

- You must be unemployed the day you apply
- You must be at least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- You must have an other than dishonorable discharge
- You must not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g., the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment)
- You must not be in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability (IU)
- You cannot be enrolled in a federal or state job training program
- You must be enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school

You can begin applying May 15, 2012, but cannot start any education or training until July 1, 2012. Up to 12 months of training assistance may be used through March 31, 2014.

I cannot encourage you enough to take advantage of this unique opportunity if you are eligible, and if you are not, but know a fellow Veteran, who may be eligible, please pass this information along to them.

Also under this new law, if you are a Veteran with a service-connected disability and have previously completed a VA vocational rehabilitation program and have used the initial 26 weeks of unemployment benefits you may qualify for an additional 12 months of VA vocational rehabilitation benefits. To be eligible you must:

- Have previously completed a VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program and been considered "rehabilitated" by VA.

- Apply within six months of using up your initial 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. You may still qualify for extended or emergency unemployment benefits.

To apply or learn more information about VRAP or Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits, please visit [**www.benefits.va.gov/VOW**](http://www.benefits.va.gov/VOW)

Thank you for your service to our country and I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors!

Curtis L. Coy
Deputy Under Secretary
Economic Opportunity